CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method, in a requested file system server, for servicing a request, comprising:

receiving a request for a referencing object from a client, wherein the referencing object refers to a referenced file system;

looking up a location of the referenced file system in a separate data structure; and

returning a redirection message indicating the location of the referenced file system to the client.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the redirection message includes an address of a referenced file system server.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the redirection message further includes a path.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the referencing object has a file system identifier.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

encoding the file system identifier,

wherein the redirection message further includes the encoded file system identifier.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the referencing object is a top level object for a uniform namespace including all file systems on participating file system servers.

7. The method of claim 2, wherein the referenced file system server is the requested file system server.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the separate data structure comprises a file system location database.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a redirected request for a file system object;

identifying an encoded file system identifier in the redirected request;

decoding the encoded file system identifier to form a file system identifier corresponding to a requested file system;

looking up a path for the requested file system in a file system identifier data structure; and

retrieving the root of the requested file system using the path for the requested file system.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the file system identifier data structure comprises a file system identifier table.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the separate data structure and the file system identifier data structure are stored in a file system location database.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the referencing object is a top level object for a uniform namespace including all file systems on participating file system servers.

13. A method, in a requested file system server, for servicing a request, comprising:

receiving a request for a file system object, wherein the request includes an encoded file system identifier;

decoding the encoded file system identifier to form a file system identifier corresponding to a requested file system;

looking up a path for the requested file system in a file system identifier data structure; and

retrieving the root of the requested file system using the path for the requested file system.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the file system identifier data structure is stored in a table.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the file system identifier data structure is stored in a file system location database.

16. An apparatus, in a requested file system server, for servicing a request, comprising:

receipt means for receiving a request for a referencing object from a client, wherein the referencing object refers to a referenced file system;

location means for looking up a location of the referenced file system in a separate data structure; and

return means for returning a redirection message indicating the location of the referenced file system to the client.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the redirection message includes an address of a referenced file system server.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the redirection message further includes a path.

19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the referencing object has a file system identifier.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising:

encoding means for encoding the file system identifier,

wherein the redirection message further includes the encoded file system identifier.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the referencing object is a top level object for a uniform namespace including all file systems on participating file system servers.

22. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the referenced file system server is the requested file system server.

23. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the separate data structure comprises a file system location database.

24. The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

means for receiving a redirected request for a file system object;

means for identifying an encoded file system identifier in the redirected request;

means for decoding the encoded file system identifier to form a file system identifier corresponding to a requested file system;

means for looking up a path for the requested file system in a file system identifier data structure; and

means for retrieving the root of the requested file system using the path for the requested file system.

25. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the file system identifier data structure comprises a file system identifier table.

26. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the separate data structure and the file system identifier data structure are stored in a file system location database.

27. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the referencing object is a top level object for a uniform namespace including all file systems on participating file system servers.

28. An apparatus, in a requested file system server, for servicing a request, comprising:

receipt means for receiving a request for a file system object, wherein the request includes an encoded file system identifier;

decoding means for decoding the encoded file system identifier to form a file system identifier corresponding to a requested file system;

path means for looking up a path for the requested file system in a file system identifier data structure; and

retrieval means for retrieving the root of the requested file system using the path for the requested file system.

29. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the file system identifier data structure is stored in a table.

30. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the file system identifier data structure is stored in a file system location database.

31. A computer program product, in a computer readable medium, for servicing a request, comprising:

instructions for receiving a request for a referencing object from a client, wherein the referencing object refers to a referenced file system;

instructions for looking up a location of the referenced file system in a separate data structure; and

instructions for returning a redirection message indicating the location of the referenced file system to the client.

32. A computer program product, in a computer readable medium, for servicing a request, comprising:

instructions for receiving a request for a file system object, wherein the request includes an encoded file system identifier;

instructions for decoding the encoded file system identifier to form a file system identifier corresponding to a requested file system;

instructions for looking up a path for the requested file system in a file system identifier data structure; and

instructions for retrieving the root of the requested file system using the path for the requested file system.